

THE WASHINGTON HERALD
DRAMATIC DEPARTMENT.

WILLIAM OSBORN

Editor

PROGRAMME FOR THE WEEK.

New National, Montgomery and Stone
The Columbia, "The Circus Man."
The Belasco, "For Better, For Worse."
The Lyceum, "Barleque."

The Music Season.

With the concert last Tuesday afternoon by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the recital of Mme. Blanche Marchesi on Wednesday, the Washington season of classical music may be said to have fairly begun. The Philadelphia Orchestra, with Herr Pohl as conductor, is scheduled for next Tuesday, and thereafter the symphony concerts will be given at regular intervals until next spring.

The Washington Symphony Orchestra, too, is making a second bid for the favor of local audiences. While they have not as yet announced any further policy with regard to the interpretation of the heavier symphonies, such as are performed by both the Boston and Philadelphia organizations, it is possible that they will decide upon this course at some future date. For the present they will give semi-classical or popular classics.

The out-of-town orchestras receive the generous patronage of Washington music lovers. The rapid attention with which the music is received and the enthusiasm displayed on the conclusion of each number is a high tribute to the intelligence and taste of our local audiences. There is, of course, no reason why the Washington Symphony Orchestra should not attain the same high grade of excellence as either of the two older organizations and in time enjoy the same prestige.

There has been already given out advance information as to the promise of the present music season. Instrumental and vocal soloists, quartets, orchestras, and interpretations of classical music by dancers are expected to add to the brilliancy of the Washington winter. Grand opera alone seems to be shy of local audiences, and the announcement of twenty performances at the Lyric Theater in Baltimore by the Metropolitan Opera Company has been a positive boon to the many who have lamented the dearth of grand opera in Washington. By a splendid arrangement, whereby a special train is run from Washington, and for which transportation is furnished free to purchasers of opera tickets, there is no reason why Washington folk who want to hear grand opera should not gratify that desire. The elimination of railroad fares places the Lyric Theater in Baltimore no farther away than any of the local houses, and it is possible to get home by midnight, too, or shortly afterward.

The fact is apparent that Washington is far better off with regard to its musical season this winter than it was last, and there is no excuse for the statement that we will suffer from lack of opportunity to hear all the music we can afford to pay for.

Farce.

For the creation of transitory pangs of hilarity by theatrical means, the out and out farce is about the most effective and least dangerous. The effect impinges on the incidents, and the incidents are usually so ludicrous as momentarily to preclude any serious thought on any subject, and so the time of the play is simply given up to unrestrained hilarious refreshment. It is a perfectly legitimate form of comedy, and has been used by the masters running from "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" to "Box and Cox."

The chief objection of the sticklers to this form is that the incidents are inconsistent, in that they exceed in comedy element anything seen in normal life, and so forth. What! People are making themselves ridiculous all around us every day, and doing it without even the help derived from a sudden separation from themselves of some artificial anatomical part, and bringing the matter right down to the present instance, which is "Billy." Who has not laughed at the misfortunes of some one suffering from a misplaced nose, or leakage of false teeth? Sometimes it is the changed facial expression, sometimes the difficulties attending articulation, and sometimes the general air of asthmaticity. It is invariably funny in real life, and in stage comedy, where exaggerations and embellishments are permitted, much more so.

It would be descending to the subject itself to spend much time in serious discussion of the topic. Sufficient must be said to say that "Billy," whether consistent or inconsistent, was certainly very funny, and it seems to us that the company deserves special commendation for getting the effect without appreciably overstepping the bounds of rationalism.

The Play Not the Thing.

Since it is the exception which tests the rule, there is no delinquency to the Bard of Avon's popularly applied exclamation, in the statement that in very many instances of recent observation the play has been very palpably not the thing.

Two of the most distinguished examples of this state of affairs are "The Chorus Lady" and "The Music Master." The comparison between these two plays has been constant and dates from the first performance of Miss Stahl's play. It was recognized by every one that neither of these plays could possibly have taken hold of the affections of audiences to the extent of the long runs they both enjoyed, without the personality and acting ability of the actors who created the leading roles.

Very likely the support that Mr. Warfield would have in his enactment of "The Merchant of Venice," were he to essay the part, would be but slight as compared with the returns derived from "The Music Master," yet it will not be denied that he has both the temperament and the ability to portray Shylock to the satisfaction of the most rabid adherent of tradition. This cannot be taken as conclusive that the Kien play is a better play than Shakespeare's. Nor can Miss Stahl's success as Patricia O'Brien put "The Chorus Lady" on a par with "A School for Scandal."

To succeed in indelibly stamping a character on the mind of the public, in spite of a poor play, and by pure force of personality and vital acting to lift that play up to the point where it is deduced into thinking that play a great one, is an achievement of the true genius.

Of Miss Stahl the public has no private opinion that she can do nothing else but play Patricia O'Brien. It held some such view regarding Mr. Warfield and the old music master. Such an opinion is harmful to the actor. No matter how well that actor may interpret some subsequent role in a play of far greater merit,

LOCAL STAGE NOTES.

"The Clansman" troop of trained cavalry horses will be an exciting feature of the play. The horses are ridden across the stage at full gallop in the third act by the armed and habited members of the Ku-Klux Klan. Two of the animals were formerly the stars of the chariot race in "Ben-Hur."

Otis Harlan, the rotund comedian, recently the principal in "The Broken Idol," and before that the efficient laugh-making aid of Elsie Janis in "The Vanderbilt Cup," has signed to appear in polite vaudeville at Chase's in the near future.

A big fireproof sign being erected on top of the buildings along the Avenue adjoining the Southern Railroad building will bear the notice that it marks the site of the great theater which soon will be the permanent home of Chase's polite vaudeville.

The revolver used in the second act of "Detective Sparkes" by Hattie Williams was presented to Charles Frohman's star by William Pinkerton, who took it from a notorious desperado in the West.

Julian Royce, leading man with Hattie Williams in "Detective Sparkes," made his only other appearance in this country some years ago with Lily Langtry in "The Degenerates." Mr. Royce is a great favorite in London, where he has interpreted most of the leading roles in the plays of Arthur Wing Pinero and where he played the role in "Secret Service" filled in this country by William Gillette during an engagement which lasted two and one-half years.

Joseph Brooks, who is associated with Klaw & Erlanger in the management of "The Circus Man," will reach Washington to-morrow for the premier of the play here.

Nancy Farnum, better known as Agnes Farnum, a Washington girl, has left the "Follies of 1909" to join "The Girl of the U. S. A.," taking the ingenue part. Miss Farnum is a native of Chicago, and will join the company in Sioux Falls, S. Dak.

Maelyn Arbuckle, though born in St. Louis, spent his early manhood in Texas. He was a lawyer in Texas, and also a deputy sheriff.

Jennie Weatherby, of "The Circus Man" company, scored one of her early hits in the original production of "Ermine" at the New York Casino, playing the Princess Pompadour. The company included Francis Wilson, Pauline Hall, and Marie Jansen.

Hattie Williams, it is said, plunged into the "legitimate" with some misgivings, but her tremors vanished when she found that success had crowned her daring.

The Hengler sisters, who appear with Montgomery and Stone at the New National this week, have danced from vaudeville and back several times, their success in Europe having been as great as in America.

George Ade, author of "The Old Town," at the New National this week, is said to be the only Hoosier who does not take himself seriously. Perhaps this accounts for his tremendous popularity.

The Duncan-Damrosch engagement at the New National in the near future promises to be as successful as their performances last season.

THE INTERVIEWER.

He Gets Miss Rose Stahl's Views on a Number of Things.

"Yes, I fear that this will be the last year of 'The Chorus Lady.' And I certainly am sorry, too," Miss Stahl seemed to be actually broken up when she contemplated leaving the part that she has made famous and which, in turn, has added so much to her fame. "I have played the part of Patricia for six years, you know, two on the vaudeville stage, when it was just a little one-act play, and four years in its present form. It will come mighty hard to leave it, and take up some other character and develop her as I have done with this one. But I guess it is about time I was starting, for people are beginning to say 'I don't believe that she could ever do anything else,' and I intend to show them that I can."

"You know people come to see me, and then, if they meet me afterward, they ask me how it is that I can walk naturally off the stage after walking as I do on it for six years. It seems very strange to me, for I could not walk as I do in 'The Chorus Lady' anywhere except on the stage to have me. As soon as I get into Patricia's clothes and get into her personality, so to speak, I unconsciously do the things that I think she would do. But off the stage I find it very hard to do those things, because I am myself then and I do the things that I am accustomed to do in other words, and act naturally. Patricia's way of talking, her mannerisms, belong to Patricia, and to me, and so I find no difficulty at all in acting natural off the stage."

"You need not think that Patricia is an easy part, for I find so in the least. It is the hardest part I ever had to play, and the work connected with it is very difficult. But even considering this, I will be very sorry, indeed, to have to give it up. It is such a natural part, and the character of the girl is so natural, and the type—and after all that is what the stage is for, to show the types and the way they think and act and live. I doubt very much if I ever could play any other part that is as natural and as lovable as Pat."

"How did I enjoy the trip to London?" Oh, I had the time of my life. It was great. I had heard a great deal about the stolidity of the English, but I tell you they know when they like a thing and then don't mind telling you so. Why, for every handclap that you get here, you get a 'bravo' or a 'brava' there. I am not criticizing our audience, you understand; I am merely comparing them with the others. I was over there for a year and I had plenty of time to see them."

"Have I any plans as to what I will play after 'The Chorus Lady'?" I laid to rest? Well, no; I can't say I have exactly. Most of the playwrights in captivity have sent me plays, but I haven't come across anything that exactly suits me yet."

"I had a play showing Patricia in another environment. But I don't want to go on playing that part forever. I want to get in another one, if only to show the public that I can do it. So you can expect to hear from me in a new part some time next season, and I only hope that I will be able to get one as lovable and pleasing to both actress and audience as has been 'The Chorus Lady.'"

William Faversham is booked to present the spectacular production of Stephen Phillips' "Herod" at the Belasco Theater week beginning December 27. This play has proved to be the most important dramatic event of the year.

"Herod" has been generally acknowledged as being not only a great play, but as an example of stage literature. Mr. Faversham has received great praise for an excellent manner in which he has produced this big play—big as to the number of people employed in it and as to the story which it relates.

Personally, Mr. Faversham has enjoyed a triumph, not only as actor, but producer. Nearly 200 people are employed in this production.

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FRED STONE EXPLAINS.

Beginning of Montgomery and Stone Partnership.

I was born in Denver and was living there fourteen years ago, when a little one-ring circus came to town and camped out at River Front Park. It put up its tents and a slack wire, on which a performer was to give noon exhibitions of climbing up to the top of the tent pole, to bring a crowd. I was a kid then, but I was some slack wire performer myself. I had practiced the back yard, and in a vacant lot, and I had at least gained a good deal of fame among the boys I ran with. I wandered down to the circus. There was the slack wire. There was the long balancing pole the slack wire man used. I was ready for his stunt.

Well, the insane impulse came over me to take up the pole and mount the slack wire. I had never gone up a slanting wire, and had never been more than five feet from the ground. But I grabbed the pole, rushed up the wire, and, before the crowd could get a good look at me, they yelled and prayed for me to come down, but I kept ahead. After I got up fifty feet, my head was clear and I had gotten my confidence back, and was feeling thoroughly at home. So I showed them all the tricks I knew, walked up the wire to the very top of the pole, and started to come back.

Meanwhile, they had sent for the manager of the show, and as I turned around, he was at the bottom of the wire, having a brainstorm. It distracted me so that I nearly fell off the wire, but I recovered and marched down to about ten feet over their heads, did a trick or two more, and then stopped. I was afraid to come down. But the manager promised me an immunity bath if I came down, and I did, and I got a bigger hand than I ever have gotten in all the years that I have been in the show.

The manager fairly took me in his arms. He insisted that I join the show. But my parents! What would they say? He and I went home, and he held out such a brilliant future, and I urged so strongly, that at last their consent was won, and I went away with the circus.

I was billed as "Freddie Stone, the boy wonder," and I did a high slack wire act every night, and in four weeks we were penniless. We went to England, where, to-day, I am a millionaire.

Finally we got down to Texas and in Galveston the show went to smash.

Then I met Haverly's minstrels and the great Dave Montgomery. We developed an acrobatic buck dancing act. The show stranded at New Salem. Next we secured a job with Manager Rice, of the old Clark street museum, Chicago, saved \$100 apiece, and tried managing on our own hook. In four weeks we were penniless. We went to England, where, to-day, I am a millionaire.

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THIS WEEK'S PLAYBILLS

The Columbia—"The Circus Man."
To the long list of rural comedy dramas must now be added "The Circus Man" by Eugene W. Presbury. With Maelyn Arbuckle in the title role, a strong cast, and what is declared to be a superb production, Klaw & Erlanger will present "The Circus Man" for the first time in this city at the Columbia to-morrow and all week. There will be the usual Thursday and Saturday matinees. Mr. Arbuckle, in the title role, has just the sort of part in which he shines—a big-hearted, outworn man of middle age, who has outgrown his narrow New England training during a rollicking, roving career in Texas as proprietor of a small circus. His aggregation brought out by the circus trust, he finds himself with a bank roll of satisfactory proportions. At the play's opening we find him returning to his native home, a Maine village, with all that is left of the circus—his elephant, his particular pride, the same being a trick elephant of something more than two tons in weight; four horses, and a red and gold band wagon, slightly the worse for wear. The circus—his elephant, his particular pride, the same being a trick elephant of something more than two tons in weight; four horses, and a red and gold band wagon, slightly the worse for wear. The circus—his elephant, his particular pride, the same being a trick elephant of something more than two tons in weight; four horses, and a red and gold band wagon, slightly the worse for wear.

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